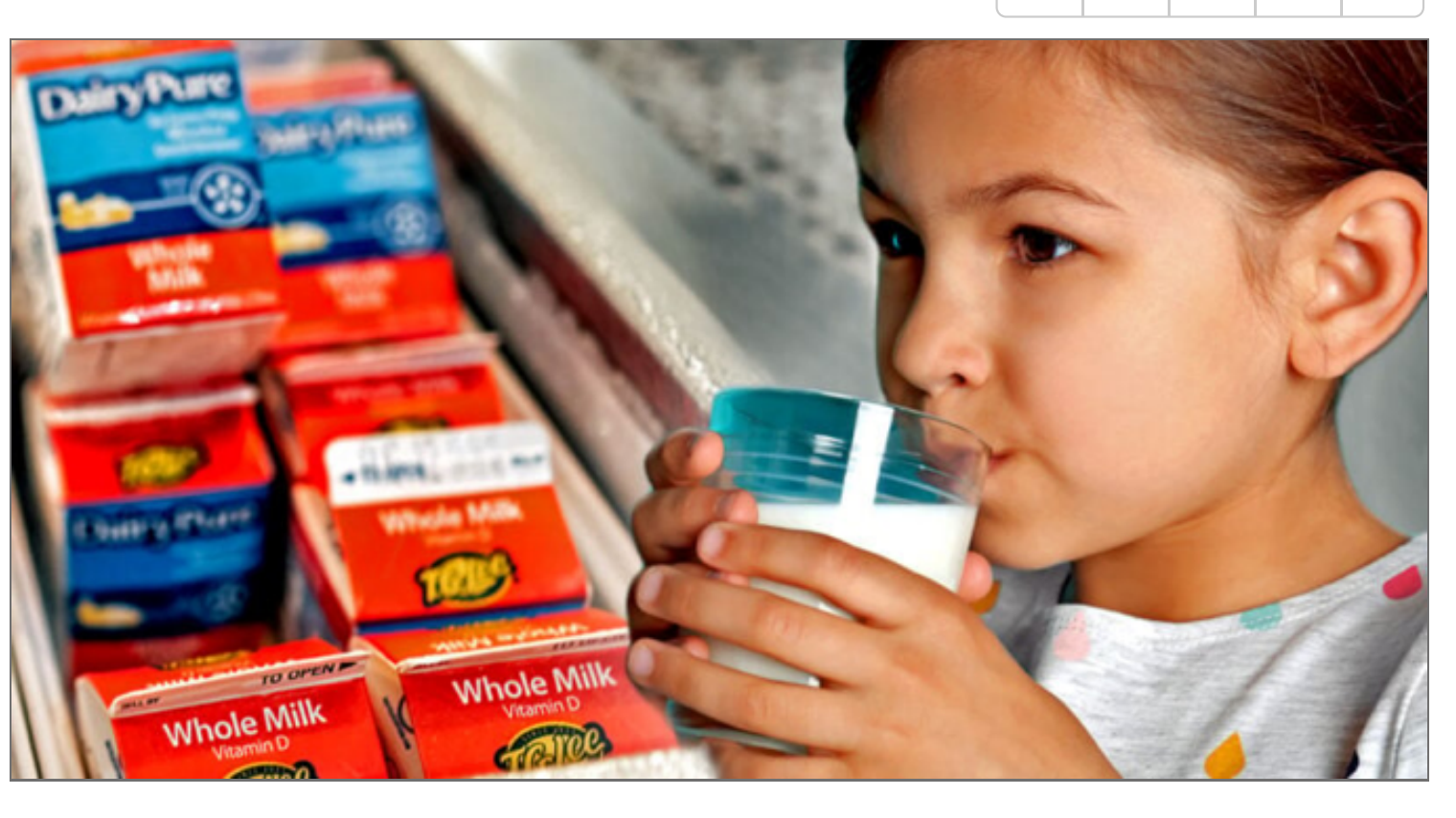
07/25/23 • BIG FOOD › NEWS

Bill to Allow Whole Milk in Schools Supported by Science, Experts Say

The "Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act of 2023" would override the U.S. Department of Agriculture's current guidelines on milk by amending the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to allow school cafeterias to offer unflavored and flavored whole milk.

By **Suzanne Burdick, Ph.D.**

20



Miss a day, miss a lot.** Subscribe to The Defender's Top News of the Day. **It's free.

For years, children at public schools have been offered only nonfat and 1% milk — but that may soon change, thanks to a bill that aims to put whole milk back on kids' lunch trays.

The "Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act of 2023" would override the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) current guidelines on milk by amending the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to allow school cafeterias to offer unflavored and flavored whole milk.

The U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Education and the Workforce on June 30 advanced the bill, which has been scheduled for a floor vote. The date of the vote is not yet publicly available.

According to the bill's lead sponsor, Rep. Glenn "GT" Thompson (R-Pa.), "Bad federal policy has kept whole milk out of our school cafeterias for too long. … Milk is the number one source of 13 essential nutrients."

The bill would bypass the USDA and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services advisory committee, which determine U.S. dietary guidelines — which in turn determines what foods schools can serve.

Whole milk banned in public schools since 2012

In what they said was an effort to curb childhood obesity, lawmakers passed the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, which revamped the National School Lunch Program to conform to the standing dietary guidelines recommending reduced saturated fat in children's diets.

The National School Lunch Program provides low-cost or free lunches to roughly 30 million children in nearly 100,000 public and nonprofit private schools, as well as residential childcare institutions.

This led two years later to a ban of 2% and whole milk at participating schools.

Since then, schools have served non-fat and low-fat milk, including sweetened flavored varieties.

This experiment was "clearly a failure," said Dr. Michelle Perro, "as rates of obesity continued to rise, now affecting 1 in 4 to 1 in 5 children."

Perro, an integrative pediatrician with more than 38 years of experience, applauded Thompson's "recognition that food policies can be revisited and changed," telling The Defender:

> "Fat is good for children. It is one of the three macronutrients the body needs for growth, nervous system health, hormone production, prostaglandins, etc. Additionally, fat in the diet helps with the absorbable and key vitamins A, D, E, and K, and are a concentrated energy source."

The Nutrition Coalition, a nonprofit and nonpartisan group that "aims to improve health in America by ensuring that the public receives evidence-based nutritional advice," last month sent a letter to Thompson in support of the legislation.

The group noted that whole milk was removed from schools in 2010 "due to longtime fears that saturated fats cause heart disease" — but "those fears are now outdated, as they are not supported by the current science."

Health writer James Capon tweeted his support for the amendment:

Not found

> Drinking less milk – particularly less whole milk, has not helped slow increasing rates of obesity and diabesity in the US.
> Why still ban its consumption in US schools? Are things about to change?
> (graph from @bigfatsurprise). pic.twitter.com/Mjfky7LiwP
>
> — Fat is our Friend (@fatisourfriend) July 12, 2023

'We got it wrong on saturated fats'

According to the Nutrition Coalition, an "authoritative 2020 'State of the Art Review'" in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology found that there is "no robust evidence that current population-wide arbitrary upper limits on saturated fat consumption in the United States will prevent CVD [cardiovascular disease] or reduce Mortality.'"

"More than 20 other review papers by independent teams of scientists around the world have concluded the same," the Nutrition Coalition added.

USDA's 2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) found that the evidence linking saturated fat to heart disease was "strong." However, a 2021 peer-reviewed investigation by outside scientists showed 88% of the studies reviewed by the DGA committee did not support that conclusion.

The scientists noted that of the 39 studies the DGA committee reviewed, 25 had null or negative findings — meaning saturated fats were found either to have no effect on cardiovascular disease or coronary heart disease, or were associated with lower risk.

Additionally, the DGA committee looked at 11 studies on saturated fatty acids and stroke. Of those 11 studies, 8 had null findings and 3 reported higher intake of saturated fatty acids was associated with a lower risk of stroke, the scientists pointed out.

Despite those findings, the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), an independent consumer advocacy organization, on June 6 issued a statement against bringing whole milk back into schools, calling it "troublesome" that most U.S. children exceed the recommended limits on saturated fat and claiming that "too much saturated fat is linked to raises in LDL ('bad') cholesterol, a known cause of heart disease."

Science journalist, author and founder of the Nutrition Coalition Nina Teicholz on June 12 pushed back against CSPI's statement, noting that the committee for the current U.S. Dietary Guidelines found that there was "'insufficient evidence' to show that restricting saturated fats in childhood could prevent heart-disease or mortality in adulthood."

Teicholz — who in her 2014 book, "The Big Fat Surprise: Why Butter, Meat and Cheese Belong in a Healthy Diet," reviewed thousands of scientific studies and argued that the saturated fats in animal foods have been unfairly maligned based on weak, inconclusive evidence — said in a recent Substack post:

> "Over the past 13 years, nearly 25 systematic reviews and meta-analyses, of both clinical trial and observational data, by independent teams of scientists have been published, and nearly all concluded that we got it wrong on saturated fats.
>
> "The most rigorous clinical trial data show that these fats do not cause cardiovascular mortality or total mortality. Mortality (death) data is definitive. That should be the last word."

Nonetheless, the USDA and the American Heart Association managed "simply to ignore these findings on mortality," Teicholz said, "even when presented personally with these data by top scientists in the field … as reported in the BMJ."

Meanwhile, the CSPI — which says it values "independence, scientific rigor, and transparency" — depicts the fight to get whole milk into schools as being led by "Big Dairy."

But according to Teicholz, this claim lacks evidence:

> "Interestingly, I've discovered that dairy behemoths like Danone make more money by skimming the fat off the milk and charging for it in other products, like ice cream, rather than selling the whole milk itself. These multinationals have shown themselves to be dis-interested in promoting whole milk.
>
> "From what I can see, whole-milk advocacy seems mainly to be driven by people concerned about child health and farmers from the rapidly diminishing number of dairy farms in the U.S., 95% of which are family-owned."

Teicholz questioned why CSPI would go to such lengths to keep whole milk out of schools. Part of the answer, she said, likely is that the group for decades has adamantly opposed saturated fats, so they are slow to acknowledge that current science no longer supports their stance:

> "CSPI was so much against saturated fats that in the late 1980s, the group ran a major campaign in favor of replacing these harmful fats with trans fats, billed by the group's newsletter as 'healthy' and 'not a bad bargain' for combatting heart disease (whoops! trans fats turned out to be even more of a heart-disease threat than saturated fats and were ultimately banned from the food supply)."

Studies 'build the case for possible benefits' of dairy fat

The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition in November 2019 featured three peer-reviewed studies that called into question the narrative that the saturated fat in whole milk is harmful to people's health.

The first study examined dairy fat consumption and the onset of diabetes in three cohorts of U.S. health professionals and found that higher dairy fat intake — when compared with calories from carbohydrates intake — was associated with lower diabetes risk in one cohort and not significantly associated with diabetes in the other two cohorts.

In an editorial about the study, Dr. Dariush Mozaffarian, dean emeritus and distinguished professor at the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University in Boston, wrote that the findings added to a "growing body of literature which call into question the soundness of conventional dietary recommendations to avoid dairy fat."

The second study reported reductions in Type 2 diabetes were correlated with yogurt consumption and increases in cheese consumption, but could not form a conclusion on whole milk because few people in their study reported drinking it.

The third study looked at dairy consumption and death from cancer, cardiovascular disease and all causes in Italy.

The researchers found that compared with no milk consumption, moderate milk intake (≤200g or ~6.5 ounces per day) was associated with around 25% lower mortality overall and 50% lower cardiovascular mortality. However, higher levels of milk consumption — either low-fat or whole milk — were not associated with lower mortality risk.

The three studies together, Mozaffarian said, provide "little support" for the notion that consuming dairy, or dairy fat, is "harmful," but rather, "They continue to build the case for possible benefits."

Americans more obese, unhealthy after push for low-fat diets

According to pediatrician Dr. Lawrence Palevsky, "Low-fat diets have been pushed by the health, medical and food industries for many decades."

He said:

> "Fat was demonized as a health hazard, and, as low-fat or non-fat items were pushed into American society, Americans became more overweight, obese and unhealthy. Why?
>
> "Polyunsaturated fats (more inflammatory omega-6 seed, vegetable, corn and soybean oils than healthy anti-inflammatory omega-3 oils) were substituted for saturated fats, and processed bleached white sugars and high fructose corn syrup sugars were added to low-fat and non-fat foods to make them more palatable.
>
> "These changes, all in what we were told were in the best interests of our health, only made Americans sicker and more overweight."

Perro, too, believes the attack on fat and promotion of carbs stems from industry advocacy. The USDA food pyramid — originally designed by former USDA Director of Dietary Guidance and Nutrition Education Research Luise Light — was "hijacked and thwarted by the wheat and corn industries," according to Perro.

Palevsky said he is not afraid of saturated fats in the diet. "What I do fear is the consumption of saturated fats from animal sources that are poorly fed with inappropriate and toxic diets, and those animals that are abused and poorly cared for in concentrated animal feed operations."

These inappropriate diets and toxic exposures and living conditions, he said, make consuming the fat of the animals unhealthy:

> "Most people are unaware that toxins are stored in animal fat tissue and that is what makes the saturated fats unhealthy for us when we consume milks and products from these animals.
>
> "When animals are grass-fed and pasture-raised, and allowed to live in the wild, and we choose to cook them in a way that doesn't destroy the quality of the fat, these saturated fats will generally not harm us. In fact, we may gain many benefits from consuming them."

Subscribe to The Defender - It's Free!

First Name.. Last Name.. Email.. SIGN UP

SUGGEST A CORRECTION

Suzanne Burdick, Ph.D.

Suzanne Burdick, Ph.D., is a reporter and researcher for The Defender based in Fairfield, Iowa. She holds a Ph.D. in Communication Studies from the University of Texas at Austin (2021), and a master's degree in communication and leadership from Gonzaga University (2015). Her scholarship has been published in Health Communication. She has taught at various academic institutions in the United States and is fluent in Spanish.

Sign up for free news and updates from Children's Health Defense. CHD focuses on legal strategies to defend the health of our children and obtain justice for those injured. We can't do it without your support

Republishing Guidelines

Children's Health Defense Comment Policy

We welcome relevant and respectful comments. Off-topic comments may be removed.

Please read our Comment Policy before commenting.

Got it

20 Comments

1 Login ▾

Join the discussion…

LOG IN WITH OR SIGN UP WITH DISQUS ?

Name

♡ 2 • Share

Best Newest Oldest

Caroline Cary Davidson
22 days ago edited

if you saw the absolute GARBAGE that they are feeding kids in the public schools (packaged, processed, sugar & corn syrup laden nasty crap, almost totally devoid of nutrition) you would see how absurd it looks for them to even be debating the fat content of milk. how about some kind of REAL food? even the 'fresh' fruits & veggies are packed in plastic, individual servings and well on their way to spoiled by the time the kids get them. there are no real 'lunch ladies'; food service workers merely warm up frozen crap (sometimes still IN their plastic wrappers!) and dole out pre-packaged servings. I would not be surprised if those in the prison system are fed better than our school kids. its all about $$$$ and never about health of the kids.

9 0 Reply • Share ›

Spevy
22 days ago

Health needs for children or humans in general have not been high on the governments list...

They do way more harm then good.....

7 0 Reply • Share ›

BChristine
21 days ago

Serving whole milk to children is a healthier choice than low or non-fat - although it should be organic and/or raw. Serving conventional whole milk contains chemicals, hormones and a whole host of nasty stuff - NOT something growing children need at all, and will have detrimental effects long-term.

5 0 Reply • Share ›

Marc Westley
22 days ago

Does the CHD accept donations from any source associated with the meat and dairy industry? Those two 'industries' are one and the same by the way. I suggest by the nature of numerous pro meat and dairy articles such as this one, that the answer is yes. The CHD's blind spot when it comes to the egregious corruption oozing from the most violent industry on the planet is a massive dent in the organization's ethical integrity. Scrutinize the likes of global monster mobsters such as JBS, Cargill and Tyson and you will uncover a litany of horrors that will put even the likes of Big Pharma to shame. Of course the two industries are in total lock step, along with the armaments industry. Are you telling me you can't see the connections across these industries? Do you really think you can build a peace movement while a slaughtered animal is sloshing in your guts? There will never be peace among humans so long as we continue to brutalize, enslave, kill and eat animals. time for you guys to stop being holier-than-thou when it comes to pharma, while not only ignoring but actively promoting the nightmare brutality of the trillion dollar global animal slaughter industry.

3 0 Reply • Share ›

Gary Brown
22 days ago

Well, if we are going to follow the science let's do it right.

June 8, 2021 Texas health department makes selling raw milk much easier

Whoever gets the credit means raw milk dairy farms in Texas are much more able to make deliveries in the Lone Star State. Once there is a sale at a farmer's market or over the internet, a complete sale can occur just about anyplace.

https://www.foodsafetynews....

Jan 13, 2020 The Effects of Hormones in Milk on Infertility in Women

Dairy consumption is associated with years of advanced ovarian aging, thought to be due to the steroid hormones or endocrine-disrupting chemicals in cow milk.

see more

3 0 Reply • Share ›

Michael ➦ Gary Brown
22 days ago

"Milk products supply about 60-80% of ingested female sex steroids." One of the many research papers quoted in the video above. Consuming bovine lactations is a terrible idea.

1 0 Reply • Share ›

Gary Brown ➦ Michael
21 days ago

Thanks Michael I agree, and why I buy and drink raw milk from a local dairy. I want real nutrition and not pasteurized.

1 0 Reply • Share ›

Michael ➦ Gary Brown
21 days ago

So it sounds like you prefer to ingest female sex steroid hormones, okay.

0 0 Reply • Share ›

Gary Brown ➦ Michael
21 days ago edited

No steroids in my milk from the producer and dairy I use. I asked all the pertinent questions from the from the owner's who use Jersey Cows.

"Your assumptions are your windows on the world. Scrub them off every once in a while, or the light won't come in." Isaac Asimov

0 0 Reply • Share ›

Bry
21 days ago

Expert = someone who has a vested interest

2 0 Reply • Share ›

ke Cronin
22 days ago

I use butter, drink whole milk and consume high-quality beef. At 58 I am more lean than I was when I limited red meat and fats.

2 0 Reply • Share ›

Heisenberg
22 days ago

Change the campaign to "Raw Milk for Healthy Kids Act" and it would have some merit. Whether it's whole or non-fat, the white homogenized pasteurized garbage they currently serve kids is anything but healthy.

2 0 Reply • Share ›

Fain Zimmerman
22 days ago

Healthy fats include dairy! Whole milk is much healthier than nonfat or skim. Also Butter and cream!

2 0 Reply • Share ›

Chezron
22 days ago

So unbelievable! Banned whole milk? While we are at it make raw milk legal.

1 0 Reply • Share ›

Ty Shlackman
22 days ago

All milk is garbage. There is no such thing as low fat or no fat milk. It's a fraud by processed food companies. All milk products come from foods that are inherently high in fat. Dairy milk is especially bad feeding pathogens and causing high estrogen levels. Dairy products contain a toxic form of calcium and cause osteoporosis, feed all cysts and tumors and cause excess mucus production. You can't create or maintain health with foods that cause acidosis and feed every pathogen. It's also a lie that food industries have promoted a low fat diet. All the major food industries including the dairy, meat and seafood industries have promoted a high fat and high protein diet. Sure processed foods are high in processed sugars and carbs but they're also filled with processed fats and oils and chemical additives. The fake food industries are promoting high fat diets as well with fake "plant based" meats, dairy products and seafood are just as high in fat as their authentic foods. Fat stimulates adrenaline production and gets people "high" on unhealthy foods so it benefits all large food industries to promote its consumption as they need you addicted to unhealthy foods which of course all the industries will lie and claim the foods are good for you and make up their own scientific studies to "prove" it.

3 5 Reply • Share ›

unacceptable views ➦ Ty Shlackman
21 days ago

And the 'Milk does a body good' nonsense was used to sell a product that has no health benefit on humans but it does lead to an increased use of Big Medicine and so Big Pharma so there is a lot of profit to be made. One of my favorite hobbies is to learn how advertising/propaganda is used to control The Crowd, the American Dairy Association and their milk mustache campaign is one of the most well known case studies along with fast food and cereal. Oh, and diamonds! It's truly incredible how easily people can be sold on something so hard they don't bother to do any research on their own.

1 1 Reply • Share ›

unacceptable views
21 days ago edited

This bill is utter tosh. Only the parent should ever decided what their children eat or drink. With the exception of raw, milk is not healthy for humans unless you're part of the American Dairy Association that is. Milk sales slumped and then they came out with "Milk does a body good" and had celebrities donning 'milk' mustaches to sell it and the people obliged. They shunned science in favor of 'the science' and bought milk by the gallons thus leading to all sorts of health issues. The vast majority of the population can't digest or process the proteins found in non-human milk, they suffer from leaky gut and all sorts of other digestive problems and also the depleting of calcium from their bones. Milk does not do a body good, it's terrible for it. Big whoop they're going to 'allow' whole milk in schools, it's still coming from factory farmed cows, it's still loaded with antibiotics and vaccines not to mention the phood they feed these factory farmed animals. You know what really does a body good? Information.

1 1 Reply • Share ›

brbg
19 days ago

The whole fat=dangerous fad was pushed by the sugar industry. People would see a steady loss of weight when they just cut out sweets, salty snacks and other empty calories. That's all that is necessary. I drink 3 half gallons a week of only organic whole milk from grass-fed cows and pasture raised if I can find it. I also eat a lot of cheese, having about 1/3 of a Cabot cheddar block for supper occasionally. My out of control cholesterol has gone down to normal once I started eating this way. Go figure!

0 0 Reply • Share ›

Kathleen Willey
21 days ago edited

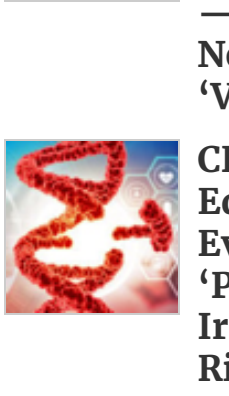
I work at my kids middle school. Many Kids don't want bovine secretions from a tortured

Donate Now

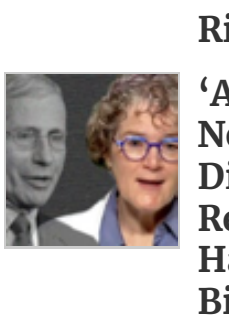
You make the difference.

Latest News

Dr. Pierre Kory: Why We Wrote the USA Today Op-ed on Excess Deaths — and Why We Never Mentioned 'Vaccines'



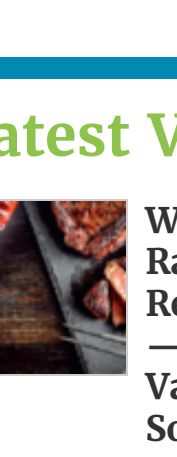
CRISPR Gene Editing: New Evidence of 'Potentially Irreversible Safety Risks'



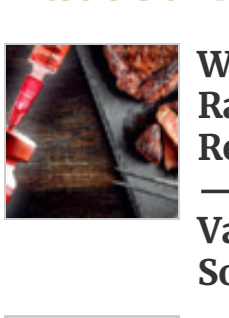
'A Fauci Clone': New NIAID Director Oversaw Remdesivir Trials, Has Ties to Biosafety Lab Research

MORE NEWS

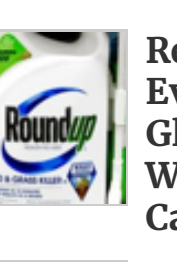
Latest Views



What's Behind the Rapid Spread of Red Meat Allergy — Ticks? Vaccines? Something Else?



Review Adds to Evidence That Glyphosate Weedkillers Cause Cancer



New Book by Doctors for COVID Ethics Details Dangers of mRNA Vaccines

MORE VIEWS

Get FREE News & Updates!

First Name..
Last Name..
Email..
SIGN UP

Children's Health Defense

Children's Health Defense® is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Our mission is to end childhood health epidemics by working aggressively to eliminate harmful exposures, hold those responsible accountable and establish safeguards to prevent future harm. We fight corruption, mass surveillance and censorship that put profits before people as well as advocate for worldwide rights to health freedom and bodily autonomy.

THE DEFENDER IS AVAILABLE IN:

ENGLISH SPANISH PORTUGUESE GERMAN ITALIAN FRENCH

TAKE ACTION

DONATE FREE SIGN-UP BECOME A MEMBER

Donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. EIN #26-0388604

Children's Health Defense • Legal Disclaimer • Terms of Use • Privacy Policy • Donate • Work for CHD • Contact • Social

© 2016 - 2023 Children's Health Defense® • All Rights Reserved • Sitemap